

## **EPA Administrator Actions – Selected Highlights**

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### **1970-1973 William D. Ruckelshaus**

- Established agency structure (essentially still with us): To organize the EPA monolith, national and regional, Administrator Ruckelshaus tried to foster a "systems approach to pollution problems by grouping both air and water programs under a single Assistant Administrator for Media Programs. A separate Assistant Administrator for Categorical Programs was to monitor three "categories" of manmade pollutants: pesticides, radiation, and solid waste. All five of these programs eventually popped out from under their "systems" groupings and became separate administrative units, with separate Assistant Administrators.
- Ban DDT: The cancellation decision culminated three years of intensive governmental inquiries into the uses of DDT. As a result of this examination, Ruckelshaus said he was convinced that the continued massive use of DDT posed unacceptable risks to the environment and potential harm to human health.
- Set first National Air Quality Standards: Final publication of National air quality standards for six common classes of pollutants--sulfur oxides, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, photochemical oxidants, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons. "These are tough standards," Ruckelshaus said. "They are based on investigations conducted at the outer limits of our capability to measure connections between levels of pollution and effects on man."
- Approve first state clean air plans: Approved portions of several regional air pollution control plans for sulfur oxides and particulate matter. The plans were prepared by State governments prior to the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970. This action marked the first time that the EPA has approved such State plans.
- Use aircraft to study quality of lakes: The Agency employed both fixed wing aircraft and helicopters in a nationwide aerial survey of approximately 1,200 lakes. The purpose of the project was to identify bodies of water in the United States with potential or actual eutrophication (accelerated aging) problems brought on by the discharge of excessive amounts of phosphates into them from various sources.
- U.S. and U.S.S.R. sign environmental cooperation treaty: "This cooperation will be aimed at solving the most important aspects of the problems of the environment and will be devoted to working out measures to prevent pollution, to study pollution and its effect on the environment, and to develop the basis for controlling the impact of human activities on nature."

### **1973-1977 Russel E. Train**

- Issue first industrial water discharge permits: In the first action of its kind in the nation,

the Indiana Stream Pollution Control Board issued permits approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to five Indiana companies for authority to discharge treated wastewater into navigable waters.

- Begin phase out of leaded gasoline: Promulgated final regulations to protect public health by reducing the amount of lead in all grades of gasoline. At the time, the total amount of lead used in gasoline amounted to well over 200,000 tons a year.
- Set auto maintenance regulations: Issued regulations requiring warning systems, such as dashboard lights or buzzers, on 1975 and later model cars to alert drivers to malfunctions or the need for maintenance on certain air pollution control systems.
- Set transportation controls in major urban areas: Final transportation control measures to lower air pollution levels in several of the nation's largest cities.
- Identifies noise levels affecting health and welfare: Noise levels requisite to protect public health and welfare against hearing loss, annoyance and activity interference were identified by EPA in a new document, "Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety."
- Require working catalysts on imported cars: Announced that any American or foreign automobile that has a catalytic converter and has been driven outside the United States, Canada and Mexico (where unleaded gasoline is not generally available), will have to be fitted with a new catalytic converter before it can be imported into the United States.
- Ban manufacture of Heptachlor & Chlordane: Citing an imminent human cancer hazard, Administrator Train ordered an end to the manufacture of the pesticides heptachlor and chlordane for most household and agricultural uses. Heptachlor and chlordane were then in widespread use for home, lawn and garden pest control, as well as agricultural use on corn crops.

#### **1977-1981     Douglas M. Costle**

- Issue Bubble Policy (Market-based innovation): Issued a new innovation-inducing, cost-cutting "bubble" policy allowing industry management to figure out the best way to clean up air pollution at individual plants, provided that overall clean air requirements are met.
- Today the phrase "protect human health and the environment" rolls quickly off the tongue of any EPA employee. But it was Doug Costle, more than any other Administrator, who elevated human health to its present status at the core of EPA's mission. TSCA was implemented during his tenure, and it was his initiative to form the Interagency Regulatory Liaison Group with FDA and OSHA and the CPSC to develop a comprehensive strategy to address human exposure to harmful chemicals. {He later expanded the IRLG into the Regulatory Council.}

- Ban on Fluorocarbon Gases in Aerosol Products : The agencies' prohibition followed studies by the National Academy of Sciences and other researchers concluding that the gases could seriously damage the atmospheric ozone layer. This layer protects the earth's surface from ultraviolet sun rays that can cause human skin cancer and harm animals and plants.
- Demonstrate effectiveness of scrubber technology on coal fired power plants: President Carter's Energy Plan calls for maximum conversion of this nation's electric power plants from oil to coal combustion. EPA Deputy Administrator Barbara Blum today cited a new report affirming that flue gas desulfurization systems (scrubbers) are the best means of protecting public health from this monumental shift in energy priorities.
- Set safe drinking water standards: Regulations require that the Nation's 40,000 community drinking water systems and 200,000 other public water systems test their water on a routine basis to make sure it's safe to drink. A novel aspect of the law requires utilities to notify consumers if the health standards or sampling requirements are not being met.
- Set new air standard for lead: Final atmospheric air quality standard to protect the public health from exposure to airborne lead, a pollutant that may, even at low levels of exposure, harm human nervous and blood-forming systems. "It is well known that at certain levels lead is highly toxic and can lead to permanent health damage or even death," Costle said. "What we are finding increasingly, moreover, is that even low levels of lead may have more harmful and persistent effects than we thought previously."
- Start Hazardous Waste Enforcement/Emergency Response System: Named the clean-up of hazardous waste dump sites threatening public health the "highest Agency priority" and established an agency-wide Hazardous Waste Enforcement and Emergency Response System to respond to hazardous waste emergencies. "We are now aware of 151 sites across the country which may contain potentially dangerous quantities of hazardous wastes," Deputy Administrator Barbara Blum said.
- Sue for Love Canal cleanup: In one of largest environmental complaints ever lodged by the Federal government against a major corporation, the EPA announced that the Department of Justice -- acting on behalf of EPA -- had filed four suits against Hooker Chemical Co., and its parent corporation, Occidental Petroleum Corporation, requesting the company clean up four chemical waste dumpsites in Niagara Falls, New York, which are posing substantial danger to residents of the area.
- Supervise Three Mile Island cleanup: EPA designated by the White House as the lead Federal agency responsible for the monitoring of off-site radiation levels around Three Mile Island, and for the implementation of a comprehensive program to keep the local elected officials and the public fully informed of near- and long-term clean-up activities.
- Begin phase out of PCB production and use: Issued final regulations banning the manufacture of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and phasing out most PCB uses. PCBs

are toxic and persistent chemicals primarily used as insulating fluids in heavy-duty electrical equipment in power plants, industries, and large buildings across the country.

- EPA and New York relocate Love Canal residents: President Carter declared an emergency to permit the Federal government and the State of New York to undertake the temporary relocation of approximately 700 families in the Love Canal area of Niagara Falls, NY.

#### **1981-1983     Anne M. Gorsuch**

- Anne Burford adopted the 1982 rule that closed the loopholes in the Agency's lead phasedown regulations {imported gasoline had been exempt, and small refiners had very lax constraints}, and created the trading program for lead in gasoline. This was a real milestone in the creative use of economic incentives for environmental protection, and it also set the stage for the agency's 1984 rule that accelerated the phasedown and quickly eliminated lead from gasoline altogether.
- Authorizes first state hazardous waste programs: Announced that 16 States have been authorized to manage a Federally-approved hazardous waste program in their jurisdiction.
- Identifies first 114 top priority Superfund sites: Announced 114 top-priority hazardous waste sites targeted for action under Superfund, a five-year, \$1.6 billion federal cleanup program.

#### **1983-1985     William D. Ruckelshaus**

- Begin clean up of Chesapeake Bay: Pledged a continuing commitment by EPA to the Chesapeake Bay cleanup under the Chesapeake Bay Agreement.
- Relocate Times Beach residents: In a joint federal-state action, EPA, FEMA, and the State of Missouri announced today that resources have been allocated for the permanent relocation of residents of Times Beach, Missouri. The action was necessary after the CDC completed analysis of extensive soil sampling in the area and advised that the hazard posed by dioxin contamination is a continuing threat to the health of citizens in the community.
- "Fishbowl Policy": The Administrator said, "When I recently appeared before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, I promised that EPA would operate 'in a fishbowl.' I said, 'We will attempt to communicate with everyone from the environmentalists to those we regulate and we will do so as openly as possible.'"

#### **1985-1989     Lee M. Thomas**

- Sets new limits on lead in gasoline: Announced standards to cut the amount used in gasoline by 90 percent. The new standard limited the lead content of gasoline to 0.10

grams per gallon, a reduction from the existing standard allowing 1.10 grams per leaded gallon.

- Expands air toxics program: Along with focusing on emissions of single pollutants from major industrial point sources, EPA also will evaluate air toxics problems by source category. The strategy calls for EPA to reduce public exposure by targeting widespread sources--such as degreasing operations, motor vehicles and fuels, and small combustion sources--and from hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities and publicly owned sewage treatment works.
- Responds to Chernobyl disaster: EPA was designated as the "lead" agency for coordinating the federal response with EPA Administrator Thomas as head of the Task Force
- Sets standards for underground storage tanks: Issued comprehensive and stringent requirements for nearly two million underground storage tanks, half of which are used to store gasoline at service stations.
- Montreal Protocol ratified: President Reagan today signed the Montreal Protocol on CFCs for protection of the ozone layer
  - ~~Created Wetlands and Marine Programs~~
  - ~~Started pollution prevention~~
  - ~~Responds to Bhopal disaster~~

#### **1989-1993 William K. Reilly**

- Rio Conference, Earth Summit promotes sustainable development: later wrote: "The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the "Earth Summit," was a watershed event in environmental history. The conference, held in Rio de Janeiro last June, also represented a diplomatic breakthrough that opened up the possibility for a new era of global economic growth coupled seriously with environmental stewardship." --Administrator Reilly
- First Toxic Release Inventory released: "This law makes available an unprecedented amount of information to all citizens, local, state and federal governments and industry on the presence of and releases of chemicals in our communities," said Administrator Reilly. "At EPA, we will use the new data to determine where potential pollution problems exist and improve on regulatory programs.
- Launch voluntary partnership programs for pollution prevention: Announced the first results of the "33/50 Program" that seeks voluntary reductions of toxic emissions by industry. The 33/50 Program was an EPA pollution prevention initiative designed to reduce industrial toxics generation quickly through voluntary actions by industry. The program derived its name from EPA's national reduction goals for 17 high priority toxic pollutants – 50 percent reduction by 1995, with an interim goal of 33 percent by 1992,

using 1988 as a baseline.

- Daminozide (Alar) banned for food uses: Announced intention to approve the request of Uniroyal Chemical Co. Inc. of Bethany, Connecticut, to voluntarily cancel all food-use registrations of the pesticide daminozide (trade name Alar).
- Commits EPA to environmental education: On October 1, 1991, the provisions of the National Environmental Education Act of 1990 became effective; authorizing EPA for the first time in its 20-year history, to launch a wide-ranging initiative to stimulate and support environmental education and environmental educators.
- Federal recycling Executive Order signed: "The Federal Government is one of the largest generators of solid waste. It is the nation's single largest customer; now it will be a leader through affirmative procurement practices to develop markets for products manufactured with recycled materials. President Bush deserves credit for committing the U.S. Government to this important course." --Administrator Reilly
- Issues final drinking water standards for 23 chemicals: The final standards required 80,000 public drinking water systems nationwide to meet the new criteria and to monitor for the contaminants. EPA estimated that when the regulations became effective, 260 of those systems, serving approximately 340,000 people, would have to treat their water for excess levels of some of the 23 contaminants.
- Commits EPA to reducing environmental risks to minorities: EPA released a final environmental equity report requested by Administrator Reilly. The report, a review of existing data on the distribution of environmental exposures and risks across population groups, included a series of findings and recommendations. Among the findings were that there are clear differences between racial and income groups in terms of disease and death rates, average exposures to selected environmental hazards, and that great opportunities existed for EPA and other government agencies to improve communication about environmental problems with members of low-income and racial minority groups. On the recommendation of the report, Administrator Reilly established an Environmental Equity Cluster, a team of senior staff from all of the Agency's programs and regions. The Cluster's principal mission was to develop Agency policies to address differential risk and a comprehensive long-term agenda for action.

#### **1993-2001 Carol M. Browner**

- New Offices to Support Children's Health, Regulatory Reinvention and Right To Know: Browner today announced a restructuring to create new offices that will oversee three of the Agency's highest policy priorities: protecting children from environmental health threats, reinventing environmental regulation to achieve better results at less cost, and expanding the public's access to information about local pollution.
- Implement Food Quality Protection Act: Issued a comprehensive, detailed plan for

implementing the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA). The new law includes sweeping new food safety protections and requires major changes in how pesticides are regulated, with the goal of improving environmental and public health protection, especially for children.

- Chemical Industry Air Toxics Rule: "This is the most far-reaching effort ever taken to reduce air toxics, and a giant step forward in protecting the health of our citizens," said Administrator Browner. "Today's rule signifies that the gridlock of the past on clean air controls has now been broken." Browner also emphasized the pollution prevention and environmental justice aspects of the rule.
- Launch Brownfields program: EPA announced a competition for new grants to help communities develop innovative ways to overcome the current obstacles to the cleanup and reuse of potentially contaminated urban properties. The Agency announced it will select new national pilot demonstration projects under EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative.
- Launch incentive based acid rain program: Final rule allocating acid rain emission allowances for use after the year 2000 for most power plants in the United States. This rule sets the stage for significant pollution reduction through a market-trading system authorized by The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.
- Finalizes leaded gas ban: Took the last steps concluding a 25-year Agency effort to phase out lead from gasoline. Browner signed a final rulemaking to eliminate requirements which became obsolete or unnecessary as a result of the ban. "The elimination of lead from gas is one of the great environmental achievements of all time," Browner said. "Thousands of tons of lead have been removed from the air, and blood levels of lead in our children are down 70 percent. This means that millions of children will be spared the painful consequences of lead poisoning, such as permanent nerve damage, anemia or mental retardation."
- Approves first Project XL plan : Implemented the first Project XL plan that seeks to achieve better environmental results by providing a company the flexibility to explore innovative solutions to its environmental problems. The agreement is the first of as many as 50 planned pilot projects that will be implemented under this Clinton Administration program. Project XL (Excellence and Leadership) is one of the Clinton Administration's common-sense strategies to provide more environmental and public health protection at less cost.
- Issue new NAAQS for Ozone: Announced new national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone, the primary constituent of smog. After a lengthy scientific review process, including extensive external scientific review, EPA determined that these changes are necessary to protect public health and the environment.
- Issue new NAAQS for Particulate Matter: Announced new standards for particulate

matter (PM) under the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). After reviewing hundreds of peer-reviewed scientific studies, the EPA has determined that these changes are necessary to protect public health and the environment.

#### **2001-2003     Christine Todd Whitman**

- Issued new regulatory standards for cleaner diesel engines and fuel: Pursued tougher controls on pollution caused by highway diesel engines, beginning with rule requiring new heavy duty trucks and buses to run cleaner.
- Established the voluntary Commuter Choice Leadership Initiative: Offering recognition for innovative solutions to commuting challenges faced by employers and employees, Best Workplaces for Commuters is a public-private sector voluntary program advocating employer-provided commuter benefits. Established by EPA and DOT, this program publicly recognizes employers whose commuter benefits reach the *National Standard of Excellence*. Providing commuter benefits helps employers address limited or expensive parking, reduce traffic congestion, improve employee recruiting and retention, and minimize the environmental impacts associated with drive-alone commuting.
- Launched the voluntary Climate Leaders program: EPA launched Climate Leaders program, a voluntary partnership that challenges businesses to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and provides significant opportunity to achieve the greenhouse gas intensity reduction goal set by the Administration for the next decade.
- U.S. signs Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants: EPA Administrator Whitman signed the Convention on behalf of the United States in Stockholm, Sweden. Ministers from over ninety countries joined the U.S. in signing the treaty to rid the world of these highly toxic chemicals and pesticides. The President hailed the treaty as one that would safeguard the health of Americans, particularly those most at risk, such as native Alaskans, while extending a helping hand to developing countries.
- Responds to September 11: Follow the attacks on America of September 11<sup>th</sup>, EPA expanded its mission to protect the environment and safeguard the public to include supporting the recovery from the devastating attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon, responding to anthrax attacks in FL, NJ, NY and WDC and promoting the security of America's public drinking and wastewater systems and chemical facilities.
- Regulatory Development Task Force: Ordered a 45 day review of EPA's regulatory development process to identify opportunities and make recommendations to strengthen the role of science, economics and policy analysis. Administrator Whitman said: "I believe that we can continue to apply new methods to protect the environment -- by building flexibility into regulations up front, through non-regulatory approaches where effective, creating strong partnerships with states and businesses, and with vigorous public outreach and involvement -- to meet far reaching environmental goals."



- Report on the State of the Environment: Recognizing the need to improve the Agency's focus on results and environmental outcomes, Administrator Whitman directed the Agency to undertake an Environmental Indicators Initiative bringing together national, regional, and program office indicator efforts to produce EPA's first "Report on the Environment." The prototype report identifies indicators and supporting data, as well as gaps in knowledge and information, in response to questions pertaining to human health and the ecological condition in the U.S. The Agency-wide effort also coordinates closely with the states through the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) and other Federal Agencies through the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ.)
- E-Rulemaking: Edocket and Federal Docket Management System?

### **2003-2005 Michael O. Leavitt**

- *Clean Air Interstate Rule:* To address interstate transport of pollutants that affect downwind states' ability to attain national air quality standards, EPA proposed the CAIR rule in January, 2004 (dramatically reduces and permanently caps SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in the eastern states).
- *Clean Air Mercury Rule:* In March, 2005, EPA finalized the first ever emissions reduction requirements for controlling mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants.
- *Announced the Clean School Bus USA program:* Seeks to encourage the installation of effective emission control systems on buses, replace older buses with newer ones, and eliminate unnecessary school bus idling.
- *Issued the Clean Air Nonroad Diesel Rule:* In May, 2004, EPA finalized the Clean Air Non-Road Diesel rule that will result in dramatic pollution reductions from non-road, heavy duty diesel engines used in construction, agricultural, and industrial equipment.
- *Established cross-Agency action tracking IT system "Scout":* Launched action tracking and management system to ensure Agency senior management is well informed of priority actions.

### **2005-Present Stephen L. Johnson**

- Proposed rule to reduce exposure to children from lead-based paint.: To reduce lead poisonings in children across the country, EPA proposed new requirements for contractors and construction professionals when working in homes that contain lead-based paint. "Under President Bush's leadership, we are addressing one of the greatest environmental challenges facing our most vulnerable residents: childhood lead poisoning," said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson. "Today's action brings us one step closer to ensuring that our nation's children are safe and healthy."
- Stronger Standards for Particles Proposed: To further improve public health across the

country, EPA proposed revisions to its national air quality standards for fine particle pollution (also called fine particulate matter) and from some coarse particles. "Our nation's air is the cleanest it has been in over a generation and today's proposal begins our next step in the steady march toward cleaner air and healthier lives by addressing particle pollution," said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson. " Armed with the Bush Administration's innovative clean air policies and the best available science we will continue to improve air quality and public health."

- New Rules that Will Further Improve and Protect Drinking Water: Finalized two related drinking water protection rules today -- one that reduces the risk of disease-causing microorganisms from entering water supplies and the other that requires water systems to limit the amount of potentially harmful "disinfection byproducts" (DBPs) that end up in our drinking water. Signed as EPA enters the 31st anniversary year for the Safe Drinking Water Act, the rules were proposed in August 2003, and were developed from consensus recommendations from a federal advisory committee comprised of state and local governments, tribes, environmental, public health and water industry groups.
- Largest Environmental Administrative Penalty in Agency History: DuPont will pay \$10.25 million -- the largest civil administrative penalty EPA has ever obtained under any federal environmental statute -- to settle violations alleged by EPA over the company's failure to comply with federal law. Under the settlement, filed with the Agency's Environmental Appeals Board, Dupont is also committing to \$6.25 million for Supplemental Environmental Projects.
- In nominating Administrator Johnson, President Bush remarked that he is "the first professional scientist to lead the EPA." Administrator Johnson is the first career staffer to rise to the top post (he has been with the agency for 24 years). President Bush also observed that "He knows the EPA from the ground up and has a passion for its mission".
- Administrator Johnson is weaving environmental stewardship into the fabric of the Agency.
- Hurricane Katrina Response: